

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. (Currently ~~amended~~) A method for overload protection for an exchange, comprising the steps of:

determining at a first exchange a congestion value indicative of a level of overload congestion at said first exchange; informing neighboring exchanges of said exchange which detects an overload of itself of a level of overload congestion via an overload congestion value that is specified network wide;

transferring said congestion value to a second exchange neighboring said first exchange;

computing at said second exchange ~~in one of said neighboring exchanges~~, an effective congestion value ~~from information of several of~~ based on a plurality of said ~~overload congestion values received from said first exchange~~, and;

controlling a protective measure for said second exchange with respect to the first exchange based on said effective congestion value.

controlling protective measures of said ~~one of said neighboring exchanges~~ with respect to a congested exchange.

2. (Currently ~~amended~~) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of transferring further comprises:~~ing the steps of:~~

transferring said ~~overload~~ congestion value to said second exchange in a call processing message;

interpreting ~~missing congestion information as an overload congestion value of 0 when a call processing message arrives without an overload congestion value and integrating said overload congestion value of 0 into said computation of said effective congestion value.~~

3. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of computing an effective congestion value further comprises the steps of:

~~computing~~ forming an average congestion value, upon expiration of a definite time interval, utilizing said congestion values received during said definite time interval, and

utilizing said average congestion value to calculate said ~~current~~ effective congestion value.

4. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of computing an effective congestion value further comprises the steps of:

computing, upon expiration of a time interval, a current effective congestion value with the aid of:

an average congestion value ~~of overload~~ determined from said congestion values received within said time interval, and

an effective congestion value that was computed at an end of an immediately preceding time interval.

5. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of computing an effective congestion value further comprises the steps of:

~~forming~~ determining a plurality of time-interval-related average congestion values from ~~overload~~ said congestion values that are received ~~in~~ during a plurality of consecutive time intervals,

weighting said plurality of average congestion values; and

~~summing~~ adding said plurality of weighted average congestion values over a time frame, producing a summed weighted average.

6. (Currently ~~amended~~) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of computing an effective congestion value further comprises the steps of:

utilizing a last effective congestion value and an average congestion value of said congestion values received within an immediately preceding time interval;

forming an effective congestion value which is elevated by a specific first value relative to said last effective congestion value when said average congestion value is greater than a specific first threshold value;

forming an effective congestion value which is reduced by a specific second value relative to said last effective congestion value when said average congestion value is less than a specific second threshold value.

7. (Currently ~~amended~~) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of:

updating, upon reception of a new ~~overload~~ congestion value, a current effective congestion value ~~being computed~~ utilizing a previous effective congestion value and said received new congestion value.

8. (Currently ~~amended~~) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said step of computing an effective congestion value comprises computing an effective congestion value only when a congestion has been established, said congestion being established when at least one positive congestion value has been received at said second exchange within a definite past time fame.

9. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said congestion value is related to an ACL value in accordance with an ACC standard.

10. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said protective measure comprises a measure selected from the group consisting of a denial of calls and an alternate routing of calls.

11. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of:

mapping said effective congestion value ~~is mapped~~ onto a protection control value; and,

wherein the step of controlling a protective measure for said second exchange  
~~a neighboring exchange controlling a protective measure implemented by said~~  
~~neighboring exchange~~ includes utilizing said protection control value.

12. (New) The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

assigning a congestion value of zero to a call processing message if said call processing message is received without a congestion value; and

using said zero value when computing said effective congestion value.

13. (New) A first exchange in a network comprising first and second neighboring exchanges, the first exchange comprising:

means for receiving from the second exchange a congestion value indicative of a level of an overload congestion at the second exchange;

means for computing an effective congestion value based on a plurality of successive congestion values received from the second exchange, and;

means for controlling a protective measure for said first exchange with respect to the second exchange based on said effective congestion value.

14. (New) A first exchange as defined in claim 13 wherein the means for computing an effective congestion value includes means for computing an average congestion value of a plurality of said congestion values received from said second exchange during a time interval and means for using said average congestion value to calculate said effective congestion value.

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